

# God's Glorious Gambit

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] It is so good isn't it to have the gathering of God's people all together considering how it is that we might actually spur one another on to take the the gospel of Jesus to the ends of the earth and you and I are blessed because we have been given an insight into the spiritual unknowable wisdom of God just having read his word right now. So let's pray and ask him to work in us some more. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven thank you for our time together this morning and we pray as we consider the things of your plans and purposes that you would move us and motivate us and help us to take our part in gospeling our nation and our world and we pray it in Jesus name. Amen.

If you want to see something happen then you need to have a plan to see it happen. And so right now there are a few big things happening around Brisbane. The Brisbane Metro is there with the idea is to try and get across Brisbane from one side to the other with the big cross city rail and projects are very costly and they're aiming to help the city function better and apparently there's something happening in 2032. There's some Olympic Games happening, a lot of energy, a lot of money, a lot of time is being invested to see it happen and we'll see how it goes. It wouldn't be a good look would it if Anastasia says look we'll just cancel it now. That wouldn't go down so well. At one level big buses and big tunnels and big games are things that are going to do. As we saw last night God is bringing about a glorious goal and that is the renewal of all things, the new heavens and the new earth where Jesus rules in unopposed glory for all eternity.

That's where we're heading. The question is how does that come about? How will that come about? And the answer is in a way that confounds the logic, confounds the logic of everyone and everything in this universe.

And it'll confound the logic of everyone we talk to and in fact it confounds our own logic as well. So let's have a look at the gambit and that is defeating Satan and you're going to particularly look at 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verses 6 to 9. So I don't know if you've seen the Queen's Gambit, it's a mini-series on Netflix, I enjoyed watching it, a female chess player. She is the goal of chess, as you know, is to conquer your opponent, is to put the king in checkmate and to win.

And how you go about that is something that she dreams about, that she strategises about and she studies and gives herself to, practising and knowing all the moves on the board, how you go about doing that. How to checkmate your opponent. Now you've got two equally brilliant opponents playing each other in the end and you're not quite sure who's going to win, how the game's going to go, right?

[ 3 : 13 ] Can I tell you that when it comes to God bringing about his glorious plans and purposes, it's never in doubt who wins. It's never in doubt what will happen and it's not like there's two equally powerful deities at war with each other and you don't know who's going to win, Satan or God, right? Satan never stood a chance and Satan stood defeated by God before he even got in the ring. He is a completely defeated foe for God's gambit and God's strategy was worked out from before the beginning of time, before the ages were established. You first hear about it in Genesis chapter 3 verse 15, you will know it, it's the promise of the serpent crusher coming to defeat Satan, right? One who defeats Satan, the deceiver, the liar and there's an expectation that he will sort of nip at the woman's heel but her son will actually crush his head. That's what's going to happen. Satan and his allies unwittingly though are going to bring about their own defeat. So have a look at me closely in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 6. Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom although it's not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret wisdom, a hidden wisdom from God which God decreed before the ages for our glory, verse 8, none of the rulers of this age understood this for if they had they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

God's brilliant plan, God's incredible strategy, his wisdom was concealed, hidden, no one knew what it was except God, right? And it's still concealed to the everyone in the world around about us at the moment who think it's foolishness. It's a secret and hidden wisdom, verse 7, a secret and hidden wisdom which is the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, Jesus the Christ, there in verse 8. Now if the rulers of this age had of this age had known that they wouldn't have seen Jesus crucified, do you get it? So the rulers of this age are the cosmic rulers opposed to God, not just the governors and kings and people in positions of authority but the rulers of this age. I mean Ephesians chapter 3 verse 10, the verse says, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. The rulers of this age are the agents of Satan, the ruler of this present evil age. John chapter 12 says this, now the judgment of this world, now is the rule of this world cast out. In John chapter 16, concerning judgment because the rule of this world is judged.

And chapter Ephesians chapter 6 verse 12, we did not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over the present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Colossians chapter 3 verse 13 following, and you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside, nailing to the cross, he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him. The rulers and authorities are the spiritual cosmic forces, particularly Satan who's actually out opposing God and those who put Jesus to death are his agents, the rulers and authorities of this world who put him to death. The secret and hidden wisdom of God is the cross on which Christ himself was crucified. Now the only power that Satan has is death and destruction.

The power of God is to overturn death and bring new life and bring about his perfect eternal kingdom where there's no opposition to his rule, where every inclination of the heart is no longer evil all the time. Satan is conquered at the cross and just when Satan thought he'd beaten God, right, by killing his son, by having the earthly religious state rulers working together to kill Jesus, just when he thought he'd defeated the one who had defeated the one who had brought him into existence, God triumphed over Satan by raising Jesus from the grave and in doing so qualified humans, you and I, to reign with Jesus in glory for all eternity. God triumphed over him by raising Jesus from the grave.

God triumphed over him by raising Jesus from the grave. He now makes it sin defeated and makes it possible for people to be born again, not of flesh and blood but by the Spirit of God. Now everything that God was doing, right, everything God was planning depended upon Christ being crucified. It's the point of singularity, if you like, where Jesus himself who is the temple, where Jesus himself who is the priest, where Jesus himself is the sacrifice, the Lamb of God and where God the Son suffers the wrath of God the Father for the sins of the world. And it was all done according to God's plan before the beginning of time. At the hands of wicked and evil men moved by the rulers of this age who lifted up Jesus on the cross, as a sacrifice for the sin of the world. God the one and only Son offered up by God rose from the dead bringing hope to the world. Now everything God was planning to do from the beginning of time depended on what God was planning for the cross to come about. That's the glorious gambit of God and it came off. It happened all according to his plan. Now if Satan had known what was going on, if he'd have known that that was God's plan for Satan to be defeated by himself doing exactly what

[ 10 : 19 ]    God wanted, he would never have done it. Do you get it? He would never have done it. Can you imagine? That just makes Satan scream all the louder.

Ah! His victory is turned into utter destruction. The cross, Christ crucified, might appear foolish, stupid, powerless and weak but for those who get it, who understand it, who see it, it's both the power and the wisdom of God.

And so just come back to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 22 to 25. Jews demand signs, Greeks seeks wisdom but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and follow the Gentiles but to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is strong with the men.

The power to raise the dead and the wisdom to deal with sin. That's what the cross brings about. How else could the sin of mankind be dealt with righteously?

You can't let a sinner go free, can you? Not judge them, not punish them, say it doesn't matter, that'd be just unjust. No sinful man could die for another man, for both rightly deserve to die.

[ 11 : 51 ]    For their treason against God. You can't have an innocent man die for a sinful man, for a start there isn't one, and it'd be just unjust to punish an innocent third party, that'd be no good.

And you can't have an ordinary innocent man die for many sinful men, that'd be even more unjust. Can't have an innocent third party die for one, can't have an innocent third party die for many.

But God, in his wisdom, shows there is a way. You can have the one sinned against, bear the cost, that's what you can do.

Bear the punishment so that he can forgive the offender. Which is exactly what Jesus does at the cross. He is the righteous one, the infinitely worthy one, who is God himself.

So God steps in, the innocent one, the one who is of infinite value, steps into my place, into your place. And that is the glorious wisdom of God.

[ 12 : 59 ]    God's glorious gambit was that Jesus would be the one perfect man, the one without sin, right up to the cross, the one of infinite value, able to bear the sin of everyone who ever lived, and will ever live, because he is none other than God the Son.

He can do it. And in the resurrection of Jesus, the great power of God is seen. The one who created all things in the beginning by his word, has demonstrated that by great power, he can raise his son, the Lord Jesus, from the dead.

And now Jesus being raised from the dead, God will certainly bring about the new creation, by raising all those who have lived. Death has been conquered, Satan defeated, justice has been established.

And now because Jesus has been raised from the dead, God will certainly bring about the new creation. It's through the death and resurrection of Jesus that he's established as Lord and Christ.

Acts chapter 2 verse 28. And the king of the kingdom comes by the apparent foolishness of the cross, the apparent weakness of the cross, and when Satan was thwarted.

[ 14 : 15 ] Okay, well what's that got to do with our ambitions, and our small ambitions? Well let me tell you, it's got everything to do with it. It's got everything to do with our ambitions. Because Jesus calls everyone who would be a disciple of Jesus to take up their cross as well.

And that might seem stupid. Come to Mark chapter 8. Matthew, Mark. You'll know these passages well, but our plan is to be reminding ourselves of these things and refreshing and refocusing ourselves on these things.

So Mark chapter 8 verse 34. And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

[ 15 : 41 ] Jesus turns everything upside down. That's what he does. He shows us that the big ambitions of this world are small and foolish. in comparison to what's really at stake.

Taking up our cross can appear absolutely stupid and foolish to those who don't see the power and the wisdom of the cross of Christ. Some of the ambitions I've heard just talking to people around the place are like this or you've heard the slogans.

You've heard live long and prosper. You've heard eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. You've heard that one. Or I'm ticking off the bucket list.

The things you need to do before you die. Or aim for an early retirement and a long holiday. Visit every continent on the planet.

This is the most stupid one I've ever heard. Die a heroic and memorable death. You've forgotten within a couple of years.

[ 16 : 56 ] Who knows anyone who's died a heroic and memorable death? But what about saving your very soul? Jesus doesn't call us to do anything that he hasn't willingly done himself.

And he calls those who would save their life to firstly give it up. That's what he does. Give it up. We can't be a disciple of Jesus without taking up our cross to follow him.

And he calls all those who would save their lives to firstly give it up. There's only one thing that taking up our cross can mean.

That is it will die to our earthly goals and ambitions and be wholly devoted to Jesus to live for him. That is the gambit for us to take.

To do what seems foolish but which is ultimately wise. Now what I've got to say next is pretty important because I'm going to be a false teacher and a failure of God's word if I teach you anything else.

[ 18 : 03 ] If I teach you that you can have ambitions for yourself which are diametrically opposed to what Jesus says in Mark 8 then I'm a false teacher. Jesus calls anyone who wants to be saved to lose their life for Jesus.

And in losing your life for Jesus and the gospel you'll actually save it. That is the wisdom and the power of God.

But there's a great danger for all of us. And that can be that our glorious gambit our strategy for life is actually folly. If the plan for my life goes something like this right get an ambition which gives me access to a good career in which I'll get a lot of money so I can have a prosperous and comfortable life get married have kids good superannuation plan all of which enables me to have a life of ease and comfort doing what I want to do when I want to do it build the property portfolio be the CEO of the big company and then do laps of Australia till I die.

And then say oh yes I'll still try to fit God in and squeeze God in on the side somewhere when I've got time when my schedule permits it.

If that's my ambition well that's pretty shallow and pretty small and pretty foolish in God's eyes. Where do we ever hear God say that in His Word?

[ 19 : 38 ] I can't find it. I can find the exact opposite in page after page after page in the Bible. And if that's our ambition to be a self-styled king a self-styled ruler of this world with God as our butler well that's just too small.

I want to dispel a few myths right here we go we're here to dispel myths I'm going to dispel five of them but the first four are like this. Number one taking up the cross is only for full-time gospel workers wrong okay myth number one taking up the cross is only for full-time gospel workers wrong Jesus calls everyone who wants to be His disciple who wants to save their life to take up their cross to die to self to live for Jesus in whatever way that might look like but it definitely means that He is Lord of our life not me that's what it means and we'll all have a vital task in the body to do for that is the path that Jesus would have us take and we'll do it for the sake of the one who died for us our ambition should be first and foremost to be cross bearing disciples of Jesus and for each of us that will be slightly different what it means is we'll not be ashamed of the cross to start with when I'm walking the dog in the park

I'm not going to be ashamed to talk to the other people about Jesus might sound ludicrous and foolish but it'll mean that we'll organise ourselves around gospel priorities it'll mean sacrificial services my time my energy you guys I'm preaching to the choir I'll sacrifice my worldly ambitions for the sake of making known the wisdom and the power of God that's what I'll do I'll be encouraging my children to consider gospel ministry as a lifelong vocation will I?

do I really want my daughter to pursue gospel work as a lifelong vocation? yes I'll give her my annual leave to serve on mission trips I might consider working four days a week so I can live a day a week for cross-shaped ministry my agenda will be shaped by God's agenda my bucket list will only have one item on it just one to be in glory that's the bucket list item isn't it everything else can wait till then that can wait I've got all eternity to check out the new heavens and new earth I can wait till then myth number two right I can save my life without taking up my cross that's myth number two

I can save my life without taking up my cross wrong no Jesus says the exact opposite you cannot save your life without taking up the cross Jesus calls us to repent and believe he's Lord the cross is the wisdom and the power of God it will mean sacrifice my own ambitions my own goals of life it will mean placing our lives totally in the hands of the one who died for us can't save my life without taking up the cross which will mean here we go I'll be willing to sacrifice my cherished career for careers are about finding identity in my work life building my resume progressing up the ladder of the world to nowhere that's what career is so we may choose to not take promotion and be content to live on what we already get I mean when I was a student I lived on ten dollars a week can I live on less give away more or may we choose to give up what the world would offer and take up what God offers going out on the limb for him number three now gaining the world is a worthwhile ambition wrong wrong

[ 24 : 12 ] Jesus says the exact opposite if you gain the whole world and lose your soul that's utter foolishness a stupidity there are some very powerful men who seek to gain the whole world and they're currently making a great mess of misery for the rest of us by doing so there have been some very powerful men who sought to gain the whole world but their ambition have traded their very soul and internal destruction in trying to get it gaining the whole world is not a worthwhile ambition myth number four giving up everything to follow Jesus is foolishness wrong Jesus says the exact opposite Jesus promises to provide more and better things in this world and better still in glory to come right Mark chapter 10 let me read it to you and be encouraged by this Mark chapter 10 verse 31 28 to 31

Peter began to say to him see we have left everything and follow you Peter said Jesus said truly I say to you there is no one right no one who has left house or brother or sister or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the gospel who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life but many who are first will last and the last first myth number four giving up everything to follow Jesus is foolishness no it's actually wise and wisdom and you get far more now plus persecutions and in the age to come eternal life okay the persecutions come from those outside the faith which is at one level expected that's that's fine

I'd love to have rocks thrown on the roof by those who hate Jesus I'd be quite happy to have that but unfortunately right it also comes from within right which may be surprising but there are walls there as well just ask any of the reformers just ask Martin Luther just ask any of the English reformers those who confronted the establishment and lost their heads for it burnt the stake for it however there's a great blessing in taking up our cross giving up everything and following Jesus giving our lives into his hands to do with what he chooses he promises a hundredfold return this life in ages to come eternal life it's true it's a great blessing to have a

Christian worldwide family that we are part of that we can have brothers and sisters any part of the world we go to so consider the gambit right do we trust the king's gambit the way of the cross do we do we trust the cross of Christ is a place to have as the centerpiece of our lives or do I actually have something different as my strategy for life and let me push it a bit further the organizing principle for our church needs to have and continue to have the cross of Christ at the very center and not just for some but for all right that will shape the way we serve it will shape the way we give it will shape the way we spend our time it will shape what we do with our lives and make no mistake it will be costly and it will involve suffering of some kind and yet promises to be the best way to live now and the future we'll get far far more out of taking up our cross than we give that's God's promise so let's lift our eyes to be engaged in cross work as we each do our part sacrificially giving and praying and serving and going raging our life around growing the kingdom of

God here in St. Lucia Brisbane Australia the world but let me finish with myth number five right myth number five you ready for it somebody else will do it all right the truth is exactly the opposite we all need to be on about the cross none of us is to be ashamed about living for the Christ and him crucified we all need to take up our cross of Christ and that is our ambition for life promoting the cross in whatever we do and for some for some that will be a real risk a real test of faith as we set our budgets for our church as we set make plans to mobilize our church for mission as we pray to our heavenly father as we serve in many ways as we're on about telling others about the cross for the apparent foolishness of God that is how he intends to make his glorious gambit name to the world

[ 29 : 54 ] God's using us and for some if not many God has given us abilities to serve the one and to lead others in this work it will mean that I am the one to particularly change the ambition of my life and to devote my life to the preaching and the leading and the serving of God's people and bring the gospel to other people in this world as a full-time occupation you'll know what Mr.

Spurgeon said if God calls you to be a minister of the gospel don't stoop to be a king let's pray God our father in heaven we thank you for your great wisdom the wisdom that you've revealed to us in your word at the end of the ages thank you that your plans and purposes haven't been thwarted and will never be thwarted and that you brought about the great redemption that we desperately needed through the foolishness and yet the wisdom of christ crucified and the power to raise him and the thwarting and the using and the frustrating of satan his plans that he was actually doing your will all along please help us to keep in step with your word and your plans and to consider our place in making this foolish message known we pray in jesus name amen